



A retrospect piece on the wonders and tragedies of the past year

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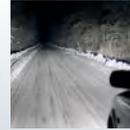
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## MIDWINTER

SYDNEY GRANLUND • REPORTER

As the first semester comes to an end, the second dance of the year is rapidly approaching. The JA midwinter is this Saturday, January 16, from 8 PM to 11 PM and closer to home at The Brick in South Bend as opposed to last year's location, Riverside Terrace in downtown Mishawaka. Tickets went on sale last Friday, but they are still available for purchase from Mr. Cass until Thursday at 25 dollars for a single ticket and 40 dollars for a couples ticket. If you plan on bringing a date from another school, be sure to complete a form and return it on time. The theme of Adams' midwinter this year is 'A Black and White Affair,' giving the night an effortlessly classy vibe. Midwinter is the perfect way to unwind after finals are over.

Last year the dance was a lot of fun for those who went. Sophomore Bella Worrell said, "Midwinter was a blast. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves." Along with many other students, such as sophomore Chris Vreugdenhil, Worrell's favorite part of midwinter was the photo booth. Despite a fun night last year, Worrell along with many others are not planning on attending the dance again. Worrell confirms her decision of skipping the dance was not based upon her experience last year. "My boyfriend doesn't really want to go," Worrell continued. Vreugdenhil, an attendee of last year's dance, plans on going again. "It was fun last year," Vreugdenhil said, "It's also an excuse to hang out with friends."

Student body sponsor, Ms. Emily Zablocki, said students should look forward to "dressing up, dancing, and socializing." Ms. Zablocki also announced that Travis Hines, Adams alumnus, will be controlling the music on Saturday. If you plan on going to Midwinter, be sure to arrive before 9:30 PM as The Brick's doors will close at that time. Ms. Zablocki continued to say, "We hope that everyone who attends has an enjoyable time." Midwinter is definitely something each Adams student should attend at least one time, so why not make 2016 the year to check it out and make some memories in the process? JA looks forward to providing another night for students to let loose and hopes for a good turnout.

THE JOHN ADAMS

**Tower**

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EDITORIAL POLICY

*The Tower* is a student-run newspaper publication and a voice for the Adams student body and staff. Editorials submitted must pertain to Adams lifestyle, student/staff opinions, or local issues.

Editorials must be sent to [slewis@sbcsc.k12.in.us](mailto:slewis@sbcsc.k12.in.us), or submitted physically to room 1831 or mailed to John Adams High School, 808 S. Twyckenham Dr.

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We at *The Tower* also request that readers consider donating to help pay for the printing & production of our newspaper. Your donations will help the growth of a voice for the local community; your help and contributions are greatly appreciated.



Dan Herrick/Zuma

## AN OPEN LETTER TO BILL COSBY

MARIAH RUSH • NEWS EDITOR

**BACKGROUND** Over the past year, allegations of rape by actor and comedian Bill Cosby have surfaced from dozens of women. At the end of December, Cosby was arrested concerning a 2004 accusation of rape and will face trial this year.

*Dear Mr. Cosby:*

Amid all the criticism that has surrounded you for the last year or so, I have, admittedly, not stuck by your side. As much as I would like to believe that you, along with other famous TV fathers, like Stephen Collins of *7th Heaven*, did not rape and/or have illicit sexual relations with women, especially underage women, I cannot bring myself to pity you. Although I do not wish to believe anyone would do such a horrendous and vile act, I was especially disappointed to hear even rumours of your escapades.

Here's why: As a young African American, I looked up to you. I have never wished to be in the acting or comedic field, but I was taught to look up to strong black figures as inspiration while growing up. Managing to rise to fame and stay successful during the '60s and on is an incredible feat for any black person and I commend you for that. However, the picture of greatness and inspiration is tainted considering everything that has happened as of late.

As you have repeatedly denied any wrongdoings, I will not speculate in this letter. Instead I will stick to the pure facts- or at least what you yourself have said to be true. Even if all of these allegations are false, you admitted in your 2005 testimony that

you used sedatives on a series of young women while engaging in sexual relations with them, while also admitting the drug was illegal. Coincidentally, one year prior to this testimony, you famously berated African Americans who put higher priorities on sports, fashion, and "acting hard" than on education, self-respect, and self-improvement. You advocated for African-American families to educate their children on the many different aspects of American culture, so that the black community would not be associated with such negativity. This speech earned you myriad criticism, but even so, the message is now hypocritical considering your actions that have come to light.

How can we take your stances on race relations, racism, and politics seriously now? How can children like me continue to be inspired by you? No, this does not completely negate your accomplishments, but it does diminish them. The problem with this drama surrounding you- even if you are not guilty- is that you have become just another stereotype that you have always publicly advocated against: that black men are dangerous. The worst is the damage to your reputation, that of a black comedian that has been respected for decades.

I wish that it did not take twelve years for this woman you have been arrested for allegedly raping to receive justice. I wish this did not make me doubt the justice system even more considering the statute of limitations for rape is about to expire, perhaps motivating police to arrest you. I wish that your case was not a classic "he said, she said" case. I wish I had faith that you did not do this, but the odds are just not in your favor at this point. I know it sounds cynical, but I wish, more than anything, that you were not African American, so the racists in this world would not have something else to point at, another stereotype to perpetuate.



# 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

ALICE GOULDING • REPORTER

*At the beginning of each new year, it is important to look back on the one that has ended and assess the wonderful – and tragic – moments that comprised it.*

2015 provided us with reasons enough to feel angry and disheartened with humanity. Terror attacks seemed relentless, targeting many of their usual victims in places like Egypt, Beirut, and Syria. This year, however, these assaults and the grief they provoked were not confined to the Middle East; twice we saw Parisians mourn the loss of their neighbors, prompting conversations about public safety and a free press. In America, gun violence continued to plague our communities, and the response from our politicians lacked the urgency and vehemence this issue desperately needs. The Republican presidential candidates, while providing a laugh here and there, seemed eager to reopen barely closed wounds, reminding of us of the dangerous line we tread between patriotism and outright xenophobia.

Locally, we saw Gov. Mike Pence attempt to pass a law which would have allowed public businesses to discriminate against same-sex couples in the name of their religious beliefs. Though ultimately revised, the RFRA highlighted how far we have to go in achieving true equality for all Hoosiers.

We have a right to feel upset. We have a right to feel wary of how 2016 will unfold. But we also must remember all the good that came from 2015.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage on a national scale, guaranteeing to gay and lesbian people, too, the pursuit of happiness, and granting LGBT couples protection and equal footing in the eyes of the law. Only ten days before, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg came out as

gay and was greeted with overwhelming support, regardless of political affiliation. American people – from lawmakers in Washington to our friends and neighbors in our local community – are growing ever more compassionate towards their fellow citizens, no matter whom they love.

The Black Lives Matter Movement became one of the most talked about political phenomena of the year. Responding to an increase in police brutality, specifically towards racial minority groups, the movement led peaceful protests across the country, harkening back to the original black activism groups of the Civil Rights era. The subject matter was grim: every month, it seemed, unarmed black people were killed or brutalized by police, while very few law enforcement officials were indicted for these crimes. The response from many Republicans was denial, from Democrats, initial indifference; the successes the movement had in bringing these discussions into the mainstream, despite resistance on both sides, showed that a small group of passionate people can still effect change on a national level.

Together we celebrated 150 years of the city of South Bend with a city-wide, three day festival which highlighted both the storied history of our community and promised a revitalized and more vibrant downtown in the years to come. Just in the past year, economic development skyrocketed; new restaurants opened all over the city and construction started on multiple vacant buildings in downtown, assuring the community that many new busi-

nesses will be seen in the area in the years to come. Finally, the river lights were installed, transforming the St. Joseph river, which is often overlooked, into a beautiful and interesting piece of public art.

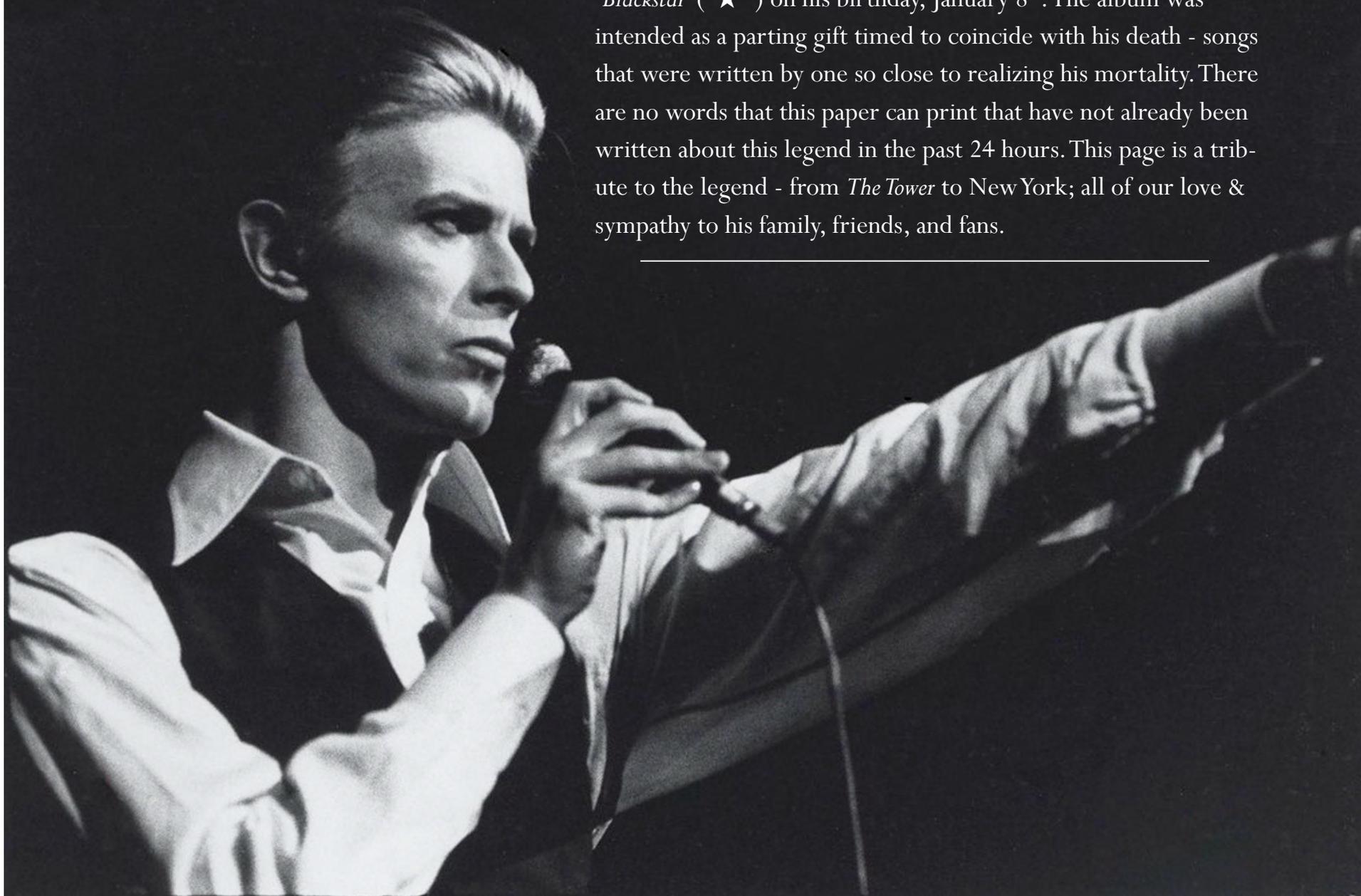
Finally this year, Adams High School turned 75 and the merits of our thriving student body could be seen in all sorts of arenas. The football team made it to the sectional championship, ending the season ranked second in the North Division of the Northern Indiana Conference – an impressive feat. The Mock Trial program swept the state competition, placing seven teams in the top ten in addition to reclaiming the state championship title. A group of seniors continued to compete after state, participating in the Mock Trial National Championship. Science Research maintained its reputation as the most elite academic elective at Adams. This year, Adams students had their science projects funded by national organizations, and lauded on both the state and national level. The IB program continues to flourish, handing out more and more diplomas each year.

It is far too easy to look back on 2015 and only see the overwhelming number of crises and injustices. It is even easier, still, to become apathetic, uninterested in all the good that is happening in the world today. Looking forward, we should be filled with excitement for all the progress 2016 promises to make while remembering the year that made these future accomplishments possible.

# “The Stardust is gone.”

DAVID BOWIE'S death in the early Monday morning hours sent shockwaves throughout the world. The character musician died of cancer shortly after the release of his new avant-garde album “*Blackstar*” (“★”) on his birthday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. The album was intended as a parting gift timed to coincide with his death - songs that were written by one so close to realizing his mortality. There are no words that this paper can print that have not already been written about this legend in the past 24 hours. This page is a tribute to the legend - from *The Tower* to New York; all of our love & sympathy to his family, friends, and fans.

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# WINTER WEATHER:

## WHAT IT MEANS FOR ADAMS STUDENTS



ABIGAIL MYERS • REPORTER

Along with the new year, winter weather filled with snow, ice, and frigid temperatures, has finally arrived in the South Bend area. For many, winter is a special time filled with family and closeness which is emphasized throughout the season. However, for those of you who are learning to drive or are new drivers, winter weather is an added stress to being safe on the road.

Many new drivers find driving on ice and snow to be a scary and intimidating task but it doesn't have to be if you take some of these simple things into consideration. First, drivers should make sure that their car is a safe vehicle to drive in winter weather-- make sure they are up to date on a "check-up" to prevent something from breaking in this harsh weather. Good quality snow tires on a car is also an important factor when preparing for winter driving. Second, drivers should be not be overly nervous about driving in winter conditions. To ensure safety, new drivers should practice in a large-empty parking lot by purposely losing control or "skidding" and practicing regaining control of

the car until they feel comfortable. This practice is meant to model losing control of your car on ice and it is imperative for drivers, especially novice drivers, to know what to do if a car starts to slide on the ice. Although it is good to be comfortable with winter driving, it is critical that student drivers do not fall into a false "sense of security" that they are completely in control of their car. Many new drivers easily forget that they must be aware of other cars around them and their actions on the road. During the winter weather, all drivers should drive slower than they normally would and remain cautious on snowy and icy roads. This means leaving more time to brake at intersections, accelerating less gradually, turning slowly, and being more aware of those other cars.

Luckily, the South Bend Community School Corporation has brought back 2 hour delays. The 2 hour delay system has been reinstated to prevent the closing of schools for a whole day when the situation only lasted during the morning hours. When a 2 hour delay occurs, every school related event will be pushed back for 2 hours, so instead of 7:45am, school will begin at 9:45am. In addition,

bus stops, zero hour classes, breakfast service, CTE programs, and other before-school activities will be pushed back 2 hours. On school days, the determination to either stay open, have a 2 hour delay, or cancel school altogether will be made at promptly 5:30am. If there is a 2 hour delay or a school closing, the announcement will be available through local news stations and radio stations, the South Bend Community School Corporation Facebook page and Twitter account, and automated/ "robo" calls from the school corporation. Also, students and parents can call (574) 283-SNOW (7669) for the official open, closed, or delayed status for the day. In the event of a 2 hour delay, when students arrive to school, they will go straight to their third hour class and not first hour. Even though classes will go for a shorter time on delayed days, they are still recognized as a full school day. This way, students can still go to school and not have to make up snow days at the end of the year in early June.

# BEST FILMS of 2015

MADDY KIMMELL • REPORTER

Fifty years from now, when you're looking back on the year 2015, you'll probably remember things like pizza rat, the dress – that is clearly white and gold and that nearly broke the internet – the much needed return of Adele, and the mass resurgence of Star Wars merchandise. It is also important to remember the many achievements in film this year. Just in case you've been living under a rock, here is a list of some of the best films of 2015.



## THE BIG SHORT

After discovering the instability of the housing market, a hedge fund manager realizes he can profit from this unfortunate situation by creating a credit default swap market. While dealing with the complicated and confusing setup and explanation of the housing market, the film remarkably is able to keep audiences interested and engaged with a well structured and amusing screenplay. With a cast of talented and versatile actors, "The Big Short" continually keeps its audiences laughing while telling the rather upsetting story of the devastating financial collapse that shook America.



## SPOTLIGHT

"Spotlight" follows the story of a team of investigative reporters at The Boston Globe. Their task: unearthing secrets about sexual abuse and the allegations surrounding the Roman Catholic Church. Aiding in the publication of numerous reports that exposed the corrupt nature of the Church, the group was ultimately successful. Rich and deeply moving, this film creates an emotionally searing effect on the viewer. Michael Keaton delivers yet another mesmerizing performance as the demanding editor of The Boston Globe.



## MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

This action packed thrill ride directed by George Miller is actually a reimagining of the original dystopian based franchise. Tom Hardy finally landed the leading role he so desperately deserved as the mentally unstable road warrior, Max Rockatansky. The film provides absolutely no explanation of plot; it's pure action from the moment it starts. Although called "Mad Max", the film actually follows the story of Furiosa, an Imperator of Morton Joe who rescues his prize "breeders" – the women he keeps as prisons to bear his children – and attempts to bring them to safety. Fueled with non stop intensity, "Mad Max" is essentially a slew of car chases, but amazing and visually stimulating car chases at that.



## INSIDE OUT

At first glance, the animated Pixar film may appear to be just another cutesy and shallow production used as a marketing scheme to make millions off of merchandising, but this playful film surprisingly tackles the wide range of emotions that occur during the difficult process of growing up. Told through the imagination of a young child who struggles with the sudden move from Minnesota to San Francisco, the film lays out the inner workings of the eleven year old Riley's brain and the emotions – Joy, Fear, Disgust, Sadness, and Anger – that inhabit and control her. "Inside Out" successfully depicts the emotional complexity of the tumultuous coming of age process. The film has gained much critical praise, even winning the 2016 Golden Globe for Best Animated Feature Film.

## SENIOR PROFILE: MEGAN MEYER

KAITY RADDE • REPORTER

The Adams girls swim team is hard at work day in and day out. A few dedicated swimmers even practice before school as well as after; they only see the sun on weekends.

And some of them — actually, most — are crazy enough to do it for four years.

One of those swimmers is Megan Meyer, a year-round swimmer for far longer than four years. Anybody who knows Megan knows that she's always laughing; anybody who swims with her knows that she'll try her hardest each practice, never admitting defeat and crushing a hard practice. On any given day after school, almost without fail, you can find her in lane one. What keeps her coming back is the close-knit nature of the team. "My favorite part of swimming is this team and how well we all get along... Everyone is super supportive of the others," she said, a fact that anyone can plainly see during practice.

This year, the team got a brand new coaching staff, a change that can be hard for senior athletes — but Meyer believes that "the most positive change [this season] is our coaches. They bring positivity to the team and truly care about us, which we lacked last year."

Though Meyer has proven herself in previous seasons — namely, the record-holding 200 Medley Relay she was a member of — the results of the team's new and improved training are apparent in her performance. Already this season she has gotten best times in the 100 (58.6) and 500 freestyle (5:39.9), 100 breaststroke (1:14.1), and the 200 IM (2:23.8) and hovered around her PR in her main events, the 100 backstroke and 100 butterfly. In the 500 freestyle at the South Bend City meet, for example, she dropped an enormous amount of time for her 5:39 and jumped from her seed at sixth place to third.

The change in coaching staff had an immensely positive impact on the whole team, but from what has happened in the pool this season, it's had an especially noticeable effect on Megan. Though her performance was already discussed, it's her demeanor in the water that has truly changed and still amazes her long-time teammates. She is a thousand times more motivated, works even harder, and seems genuinely happy to do it every day — and an aura like that from a captain has just as much of an impact on the attitude and atmosphere of the team as the coaches do. "[Our coaches] have the expectation that we want to be there and work hard, so it

leaves little room for a bad attitude," Meyer said.

"Her humor is what keeps us going through the longest days," Stephanie Portolese, one of the morning and night swimmers, said.

Looking toward the future, Meyer said, "I will miss the team, and no longer being a part of a group of people you spend so much of your time with will be sad and different. The team acts as almost instant friends and it's nice to know you have that group in your life." Even though she doesn't plan on swimming in college, all those years taught her lessons that no swimmer can avoid — hard work, confidence, fake-it-til-you-make-it, the list goes on — and Meyer reflected, "Swimming has taught me time-management, which will be helpful for college."

To underclassmen or people considering swimming next year, she said, "My advice would be to work hard because, although it's hard both mentally and physically, the sport is so rewarding."

Whatever the future holds for Megan, her friends know she'll dive in headfirst — and find a way to enjoy the ride no matter what it holds.

## NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

NIKI HAKIMZADEH • REPORTER

As the new year begins, many people are seeking a New Year's resolution, hoping that maybe, just maybe, this year they will accomplish the goals they have always wanted to achieve. For some reason people believe that the drop of a ball can change a year's worth of procrastinating. That maybe "this year will be different".

Unfortunately in most cases, the desire to accomplish their lofty goal dies quickly, rarely lasting until spring break. According to a 2015 poll by the University of Scranton, 45 percent of Americans regularly make New Year's resolutions. Of that 45 percent, 64 percent make it past one month, and a pitiful 46 percent make it past six. These results can make you wonder: what kind of goals are these 45 percenters making? The same poll states that the top five resolutions for 2015 were: 1) Lose weight 2) Get organized 3) Spend less and save more 4) Enjoy life to the fullest, and 5) Stay fit and healthy. By the end of the year only 8 percent of those who made New Year's resolutions were successful in achieving it.

Now, for those of you who will still optimistically make your New Year's resolution, here's how you can be a part of that 8 percent. First, you want to plan ahead and start with a realistic goal. The sooner you have a goal in mind, the easier it will be to get on track to achieving that goal. You also

shouldn't make more than one or two goals at once. It's easy to become overwhelmed when you have too many goals that you are determined to achieve in only one year's time. Make goals that are specific, and use timeframes to motivate you to manage and complete your goal. Once you have made your goal and know how you will achieve it, write it down and put it somewhere that will be in view. Constantly seeing your goal will motivate you and keep you on track. Another way that you can keep your resolution in mind is to tell people. Fill in your friends and family on your latest goal, they will encourage you and avert any possible attempts to give up. However, if you do fall off the New Year's resolution wagon, don't take that as an opportunity to completely abandon your goal. Many people believe slipping a little is a sign to quit, but it is all part of the process to accomplish a goal. Making a change to your lifestyle may be difficult, you just need to remember to pick yourself up and get back to your goal.

Here at JA the new year has brought many New Year's resolutions from students and teachers alike. English teacher Mrs. Tamara Fisher (formerly known as Ms. Kries) made her resolution due to a recent visit to the doctors office. Fisher said, "I'm going to begin a workout routine because my doctor says I'll die if I don't (Fisher is diagnosed as prediabetic)." She continued saying, "I got a pass to the rec near my home and roped my husband into working out with me!" Junior Thomas Dang also has a workout goal for 2016. "My New Year's resolution is to hit 270 on the flat bench," he said. "I try to be flexible and put as much time as I can into working out." Following the other health related goals, spanish teacher Mr. Joel Krueger said, "I have a real weakness for pastries and desserts. I'm making a resolution to avoid the bakery aisle at the supermarket, the West End Bakery, and Rise and Roll."

Although the majority of resolution makers usually have fitness related goals, several JA students had more distinct goals. Sophomore Rory Manley plans on becoming more patient this year. She said, "I plan to start waiting for my turn to speak and to not always worry about the time." Senior Jordan Tafelski's New Year's resolution is to find a job. Finally, freshman Gordon Lander said his New Year's resolution is to "make more memes" and he has made a three step process which he said "is crucial to creating danker and danker memes". Step one: "Meme often to establish habit", step two: "Spread memes", and step three: "Receive feedback about my memes."

Nevertheless, whatever your goal is for 2016 remember to have fun while you're doing it. Have a Happy New Year JA!